

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 ARA-06 ACDA-07 SAJ-01

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /091 W

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R 020800Z APR 76

FM AMEBASSY MAPUTO

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4426

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 636

CINCEUR

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MAPUTO 0330

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, MZ, CU, UR

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF CUBANS, SOVIETS ARMS ARRIVING IN MOZAMBIQUE

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A NUMBER OF REPORTS OF THE ARRIVAL AND PRESENCE OF CUBANS IN MOZAMBIQUE AND OF SOVIET ARMS TO MOZAMBIQUE IN LAST FEW DAYS FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES (PROTECT ALL).

A. A MANAGER OF A LOCAL RESTAURANT TOLD EMBOFF THAT ON MARCH 29 A PARTY OF 35 CUBANS WAS IN HIS MAPUTO RESTAURANT WITH ARMY ESCORTS IN A PRIVATE DINING ROOM HAVING A PARTY. HE KNEW THEY WERE CUBANS BECAUSE THEY SPOKE SPANISH.

B. A SENIOR SHIPPING AGENT ADVISED THAT HIS BEIRA OFFICE HAS TOLD HIM THAT GPRM HAS TAKEN OVER TWO BEIRA HOTLS FOR USE BY ARRIVING CUBANS.

C. SOUTH AFRICAN WHO WORKS AT MAPUTO PORT TOLD EMBOFF APRIL
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1 THAT DURING WEEK OF 21-27 MARCH A SOVIET SHIP OFFLOADED A LARGE AMOUNT OF ARMS IN MAPUTO AT NIGHT. INCLUDED IN OFFLOADED

CARGO WERE A NUMBER OF BLACK CYLINDERS ABOUT FOUR FEET LONG WHICH SOURCE THOUGHT WERE ROCKETS. HE ALSO NOTED PRESENCE IN MAPUTO HARBOR OF ANOTHER SHIP, UNMARKED AND FLYING NO FLAG, WHICH HE CLAIMED, ACCORDING TO PORT GOSSIP, WAS EITHER A SOVIET OR CUBAN SHIP CARRYING ARMS.

D. ROBIN WRIGHT, CORRESPONDENT OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, TOLD AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFF THAT SHE HAD BEEN TOLD BY THE BEIRA REPRESENTATIVE OF RENNIES SHIPPING AGENCY, THAT HE HAS PERSONALLY WITNESSED THE OFFLOADING OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM RUSSIAN SHIPS. IN BEIRA. HE HAS NOT SEEN ANY TANKS (WHICH HAS BEEN REPORTED IN THE FOREIGN PRESS) BUT HE HAS SEEN ARMORED VEHICLES, AMMUNITION AND BOXES MARKED AK WITH SOME NUMBERS. HE SAID THESE SHIPS WERE UNLOADED BY FRELIMO SOLDIERS IN A RESTRICTED AREA OF THE BEIRA PORT. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE HAS SEEN SMALL GROUPS OF WHAT HE TOOK TO BE CUBAN SOLDIERS DISEMBARKING AT BEIRA.

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2. COMMENT: THE PERIODIC ARRIVAL OF SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN MOZAMBIQUE IS NOT NEW. BOTH THE MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT AND THE ZIMBABWE GUERRILLAS READILY ADMIT THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED AND CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SOVIET EQUIPMENT. MOREOVER, FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO HAS ACKNOWLEDGED TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR (MAPUTO 261) THAT THERE ARE CUBAN MILITARY ADVISORS IN MOZAMBIQUE.

3. WHAT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE EMBASSY TO ASSESS IS WHETHER THE SOVIET MILITARY SHIPMENTS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS CONSTITUTES A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE, WHETHER HEAVY AND MORE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT IS COMING IN, WHETHER A RAPID BUILD-UP OF CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IS NOT UNDERWAY, OR WHETHER CUBAN COMBAT UNITS ARE BEGINNING TO ARRIVE. THE ABOVE REPORTS

,
ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUALLY UNCONFIRMED, GIVE US CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

4. AS THE DEPT IS AWARE, THE EMBASSY'S ACCESS TO MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL IS LIMITED AND TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF MAPUTO IS TIGHTLY RESTRICTED. WE WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO REPORT THE BITS AND PIECES WE PICK UP HERE IN HOPE THAT THEY MAY BE
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USEFUL IN CORROBORATING INFORMATION COLLECTED ELSEWHERE. THE AMBASSADOR PLANS TO REQUEST PERMISSION FOR HIMSELF AND AN EMBOFF TO TRAVEL TO BEIRA, NACALA AND THE CAHORA BASSA AREA ONCE HE HAS PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO SEE WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE PICKED UP.
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